Shropshire Entomology

A newsletter focusing on the study of insects and other invertebrates in Shropshire (Vice County 40)

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Welcome

Welcome to the 16th edition of *Shropshire Entomology*.

This edition includes some County Recorder reports for 2018 and the usual mix of other articles. Please do continue to submit your notes and articles. We are particularly keen to receive notes of new species for Shropshire. The deadline for the next edition, to be published next autumn is 31 October 2020. Please send contributions to vc40insects@talktalk.net

Nigel Jones and Gordon Leel

Shropshire Entomology is published online as a freely available pdf from the Shropshire Ecological Data Network's website.

Submission guidelines for articles

Please wherever possible state authors for key species mentioned in the article eg. *Phaeostigma notata* (Fabricius, 1781)

Photographs should ideally be above 200kb in size. We may crop photos to fit. Please provide the photographer's name or the source of the photograph.

Please send text in a word file. Only use capital letters for site or people's names. Lower case letters should be used for vernacular or common species names except for those named after someone e.g.; Fallen's leatherbug.

Many thanks, the Editors

Contents

Some recent beetle finds from the Oswestry area
Dan Knight 2

The curious fly *Aenigmatias lubbockii* (Verrall, 1877) (Phoridae) in Shropshire
Nigel Jones 3

Notable Diptera from the Clun Forest area
Nigel Jones 3

Psocoptera 2018
Keith Fowler 4

A shieldbug and leatherbug new to Shropshire in 2019
Keith Fowler 5

A New Cockroach Species for Shropshire. But what is it?
David Williams 6

Terrestrial Hemiptera 2018
Keith Fowler 8

Beyond the Basics
Godfrey Blunt 11

A new Odonate arrival in Shropshire!
Sue Rees Evans 13

Woodwasps in The Shropshire Wyre
David Williams 15

Shropshire Entomology Day – Sunday 26 January 2020 at Preston Montford Field Centre.

For details see page 13.

Some recent beetle finds from the Oswestry area

Dan Knight

The following brief notes cover a few of the more interesting beetles found during 2016 – 2018 in north-west Shropshire. All would appear to be new to the county except where noted.

Rugilus geniculatus (Erichson,1839) (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae) – a red data book rove beetle with "not many recent records" (Lott and Anderson, 2011). It is readily distinguished from its congeners by the presence of spikes on sternite VII in the male. This species has been found in good numbers in seven adjacent tetrads centred on Oswestry, mostly from small, brownfield sites but also from the south-facing slopes of Old Oswestry Hillfort and by a track in a forestry clear-fell, with all sites being dry and sparsely vegetated.

Aphodius distinctus (Muller,O.F.,1776) (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae) – A "highly localised" (Lane and Mann, 2016) dung beetle associated with sandy soils. A single individual of this species was found in a pile of chicken litter at Aston Locks. The national recorder for this group, Darren Mann, is interested to know the status of this species in Shropshire, however, further searches on the sandy soils in the Nesscliffe/Knockin area have been unsuccessful. There is a good population in the Kidderminster area (Brown, 2013) so further searches on the sandy soils around Bridgnorth might be worth undertaking.

Myrmecocephalus concinnus MacLeay, 1873 (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae) – a cosmopolitan aleocharine rove beetle of distinctive 'ant-like' appearance. This species was found in good numbers in a pile of hay and fodder beet near Rednal, and in small numbers in a manure heap near Knockin.

Elaphrus uliginosus Fabricius, 1792 (Coleoptera: Carabidae) – A scarce, wetland ground beetle with a largely western distribution, this species has been found at a couple of long-standing wetland sites locally.

Rhizophagus picipes (Olivier, 1790) (Coleoptera: Monotomidae) – Found in good numbers in a pile of rotting fodder beet near Knockin, there is a single previous Shropshire record from Chetwynd Park in 1992. A scarce species associated with dead wood habitats, but also found in rotting vegetation and fungi. Piles of rotting fodder beet have proved to hold an interesting assemblage of beetle species locally, including a number I rarely find by other means.

Oxytelus migrator Fauvel, 1904 (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae) – A fairly recent addition to the British fauna this rove beetle, originally from Asia, still seems to be infrequently recorded nationally. A singleton of this species was sieved from a pile of mixed silage and straw at Morton Common.

Pachyrhinus lethierryi (Desbrochers, 1875) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) – Yet another recent British colonist, this weevil has established and spread rapidly. Present in many places around Oswestry and likely to be present throughout Shropshire. In common with a number of other recent insect colonists this species is associated with Lawson's cypress.

Tetratoma desmarestii Latreille, 1807 (Coleoptera : Tetratomidae) – A scarce, winter active species associated with fungoid oak branches which has been found on dead oak at Old Oswestry Racecourse and Morton Common.

Stenus fornicatus Stephens, 1833 (Coleoptera : Staphylinidae) – A small, wetland rove of characteristic appearance with a scattered, largely southern, distribution. Found in marsh litter at a couple of sites along the Montgomery Canal.

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Derek A. Lott and Roy Anderson, 2011. The Staphylinidae (rove beetles) of Britain and Ireland. Parts 7 & 8 Oxyporinae, Steninae, Euaesthetinae, Pseudopsinae, Paederinae, Staphylininae. RES Handbooks for the identification of British insects. Volume 12 part 7.

Lane, S.A. and Mann, D.J. 2016. A review of the status of the beetles of Great Britain: The stag beetles, dor beetles, dung beetles, chafers and their allies – Lucanidae, Geotrupidae, Trogidae and Scarabaeidae (NECR224) Species status No. 31 Natural England Publications.

Alan Brown. Coleoptera of note found in the Kidderminster area 2010–2013. Worcestershire Record 35 (November 2013) pages 21-25.

The curious fly *Aenigmatias lubbockii* (Verrall, 1877) (Phoridae) in Shropshire

Nigel Jones

During the Shropshire Invertebrate Group meeting at Haughmond Hill on 21 July 2019, I investigated an upturned tree root-plate, in the hope of discovering aculeate Hymenoptera nesting in the exposed soil of the plate. I soon saw a number of nest entrances of Halictid bees in the genus *Lasioglossum.* After watching female *Lasioglossum* bees going back and forth to their nests I realised that there were several small flies walking about on the root-plate, so I pooted these up, as well as a small, mysterious beetle-like insect. On inspecting the catch under the microscope later that day I quickly realised that the mysterious insect was one of the wingless Phoridae that I had occasionally seen images of on Diptera themed internet web pages. There are not many wingless Phorids in Britain, so I was able to quite quickly key out the specimen as *Aenigmatias lubbockii*; a bizarre wingless fly that also lacks halteres, and looks very unlike the average fly (Figs. 1 and 2). The other flies I had seen walking about on the root-plate were the fully winged males of *A. lubbockii*, which also keyed out quite readily to this species – a welcome relief, as Phoridae can be devilishly difficult for non specialists to identify.

A. lubbockii is rarely recorded, probably on account of its small size and the dearth of entomologists that study Phoridae. Unsurprisingly, it has not previously been recorded in Shropshire. Although the specimens I saw appeared to be associated with Halictid bees, they are considered to be nest associates of ants in the genus *Formica.*

Notable Diptera from the Clun Forest area

Nigel Jones

On 8th August 2019, John Lyden found the scarce *Trixa caerulescens* Meigen, 1824 (Tachinidae) at Crossways in the Clun Forest. Not only are there rather few UK records for this large orange marked fly, but all other UK records come from the south east of England, occurring no further north than London. In 2018 John recorded another very noteworthy fly for Shropshire – the Western beefly *Bombylius canescens* Mikan, 1796 (Bombylidae), seeing at least three individuals on three separate days in May and June. *B. canescens* had not been recorded in Shropshire since Herbert Bury's 1920 record from Longner, near Atcham.

Trixa caerulescens (Photo by John Lyden)

Psocoptera 2018

Keith Fowler

If you beat or sweep trees in pursuit of your chosen interest then you are likely to find barkflies in your by-catch. Pause a moment and take a look at them. You will notice that they occur in a range of sizes and many have patterned wings. Take a little more time and you will discover that for several species the wing pattern is distinctive. You will be delighted to learn that this pattern enables you to identify the species and create a record which I will be happy to receive.

About 50% of the 70 or so psocoptera species that occur outdoors can be identified primarily on the wing pattern. Help is readily available from the Barkfly Recording Scheme's website (http://www.brc.ac.uk/schemes/barkfly/homepage.htm) which has a key based on the wing venation and pattern. Where the wing pattern is not distinctive it includes other features that separate the species should you wish to take your investigation further.

As examples here are a couple of species that can be identified on wing pattern alone in the field:

Graphopsocus cruciatus

The sweeping shaded "m" at the tip of the wing and the darker markings towards the base identify this species.

This is commonly found on the branches of a number of deciduous trees including oak, ash and hazel.

Stenopsocus stigmaticus

The prominent dark line along the edge of the pterostigma cell and the lack of other wing markings are sufficient to identify this species.

Graphopsocus cruciatus (Photo by Nigel Jones)

Stenopsocus stigmaticus (Photo by David Williams)

This is a less common barkfly found on the branches of several deciduous trees including ash, hazel and willow

2018

This year I received records for 32 species; there were 193 records, which included 14 via iRecord, from 11 recorders. The number of species found in the county now stands at 44 and the total number of records 1029 which, believe it or not, makes it one of the better recorded counties for the country.

The distribution maps for the family is located on the FSC Biodiversity Projects website (http://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/)and found by selecting "Resources" from the menu, then "Online maps and atlases" followed by "Shropshire psocoptera" of by using this link: https://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/?q=fullscreen/psocopteraatlas.

New species to the county:

- *Cuneopalpus cyanops* (Rostock, 1876) (Psocoptera: Elipsocidae) was beaten from Scot's pine at side of a path in the woodland on Haughmond Hill by Keith Fowler on 6th June 2018. A second was found by Graham Wenman at Upper Gravenor on 22nd July.
- *Elipsocus abdominalis* Reuter, 1904 (Psocoptera: Elipsocidae) was collected by Natural England on 25th July 2018 during as part of their fogging exercise on Yew trees in the Wyre Forest.
- *Kolbia quisquiliarum* (Psocoptera: Amphipsocidae) Bertkau, 1882 was taken in a vacuum sample from vegetation on Hodnet Heath by Keith Fowler on 22nd August 2018. This is one of the few barkflies that is not found in trees or bushes.
- *Trichopsocus clarus* (Banks, 1908) (Psocoptera: Trichopsocidae) was beaten from vegetation in a churchyard at Bishop's Castle on 4th October 2018 by Keith Fowler

A shieldbug and leatherbug new to Shropshire in 2019

Keith Fowler

After a drought of a few years without any new shieldbug or their allies appearing in the county two new species were found within two days: an ornate shieldbug, *Eurydema ornata* (Linnaeus, 1758) and a box bug, *Gonocerus acuteangulatus* (Goeze, 1778).

Jen and Les Thomas found an unusual shieldbug on a fuchsia in their garden on 1st August 2019. They took a photograph and, not certain of the species, sent it to the National Shieldbug and Allies Recorder, Tristan Bantock. Tristan was able to confirm that it was an ornate shieldbug.

Ornate shieldbug (Photo by Jen and Les Thomas)

This shieldbug is a recent arrival into the country but has become established in a few areas along the south coast. Its arrival in Shropshire is, therefore, rather a surprise. It seems likely that it has arrived in the vicinity on garden produce or some other transport from the continent. Unfortunately there was only one individual seen and it had vanished by the following morning.

The box bug was found by Dave Barnett at work just outside the office building at Bridgnorth Aluminium on 2nd August 2019 It was one of those chance encounters but Dave was able to take a record photograph on his mobile phone. Dave showed the photograph to Gary Farmer who identified it.

A box bug is a slightly smaller, slimmer version of a dock bug, *Coreus marginatus*, but with sharply angled corners to its pronotum rather than the rounded ones of a dock bug.

The arrival of both these species was anticipated by Pete Boardman in the shieldbug and allies atlas

Box bug (Photo by Dave Barnett)

(Boardman, 2014). Ornate shieldbug had been found in a delivery of broccoli in Worcestershire in 2000 (Micklejohn, 2011) and Pete thought that the boom in organic vegetable boxes may lead to this bug, which is associated with crucifers, turning up in the county. Much more prosaically box bug had been found in Worcestershire in the past and was believed to be spreading northwards.

My thanks to Jen and Les Thomas and Dave Barnett for giving me permission to use their photographs and reporting their finds and to Tristan Bantock and Maria Justamond for bringing them to my attention.

References

Boardman, P.J. (ed.) 2014. *A provisional atlas and account of the shieldbugs and allies of Shropshire.* FSC Publications

Micklejohn, J. 2011. Worcestershire Record No. 30, April 2011. *Striking Red and Black Bugs (Hemiptera – Heteroptera) in Worcestershire* (Pages 23-24)

A New Cockroach Species for Shropshire. But what is it?

David Williams

In November 2018 I received an email from Maria Justamond. She had purchased a *Phalaenopsis* orchid from a shop in Shrewsbury. On re-potting it at home, a 2-3mm long insect had emerged from it & made off across the kitchen table, but not swiftly enough to escape being potted. Realising it was a cockroach nymph, she fired off a message to me, asking if I would give it a home. I accepted. Thus began seven months of rearing it to adulthood (fortunately, it quickly proved to have an appetite for carrot) and a similarly lengthy search for an identification which took in Australia, New Zealand, the USA & the Natural History Museum in London.

I photographed the nymph and Maria posted the pictures on *Facebook* and *Twitter*. This quickly brought a suggested identification of *Shelfordina orchidae* (Asahina, 1985), the 'orchid cockroach'. Known predominantly from Australia, this lead me, via a mutual contact on the photo-sharing website *Flickr* to David Rentz, the author of '*A Guide to the Cockroaches of Australia*'. A number of emails followed but ultimately he was unable to either confirm or deny the identification. He did, however, suggest that I contact George Beccaloni, formerly of the NHM (retired). George is behind the *cockroach.speciesfile.org* website and an authority on the group.

The nymph continued to grow and develop. By April 2019 it had finally moulted to adulthood and was now about 11mm long. I had continued to photograph its development and feed photos to Maria, who continued to post them online. Photographs of the adult produced a suggestion from somewhere in New Zealand of the genus *Cariblatta,* Hebard, 1916. I emailed George Beccaloni at the end of the month, and on May 1st he replied, making two suggestions of significance. Firstly, he agreed that *Cariblatta* seemed a good identification and suggested *C. lutea* (Saussure & Zehntner, 1893), the 'small yellow cockroach' as a possible species. Secondly, he copied in Dr. Heidi Hopkins "a colleague in the USA, to see what she makes of it." She replied, agreeing that *C. lutea* was "a good candidate". Unfortunately, it transpires that keys to the genus do not exist. Short of direct comparisons with type specimens, '*Cariblatta* cf *lutea*' seems to be as far as it is possible to get with the identification. The type for *C. lutea* is apparently held by the NHM in London. But the genus has 70+ species, and is confined to the Americas, so a search of all the potential matches could involve a lot of travelling!

On May 18th the insect revealed itself to be a female by producing an ootheca. She carried it around for a few days before depositing it on May 21st. More emails to Dr Hopkins only served to demonstrate the lack of detailed knowledge of the group. She suggested I should watch closely to see what happened, as parthenogenisis might be possible. In the event, nothing has emerged, and by October 2019 the ootheca looked very dead.

Having produced the ootheca, the insect lived on for only another couple of weeks, being found dead on June 5th. I decided the specimen should be preserved in the best way to allow future identification, should keys become available. More questioning of Dr Hopkins about the best way to preserve it produced no particular instructions: it should be pinned, but she suggested that cockroaches are usually set with the wings closed. As two of the three British native species are separated by structures on the dorsal surface of the abdomen, I decided to ignore this and have the specimen set with one set of wings 'open'. My own setting and pinning skills are rudimentary at best. Having seen David Poynton's superbly set Lepidoptera specimens, I asked him if he would do the job for me. He agreed and has done a magnificent job, especially as the body had been in my fridge for about six weeks before I handed it over to him. I am currently in possession of the specimen, but ultimately I would like it to reside in a publicly-accessible collection, and am planning to donate it to the collection at Preston Montford. But whether we will ever get further than *Cariblatta* cf *lutea* remains to be seen.

C. lutea adult 6th April 2019

C. lutea adult pinned

C. lutea nymph 7th March 2019

C. lutea nymph 13th Nov 2018

C. lutea adult with ootheca 21st May 2019

Terrestrial Hemiptera 2018

Keith Fowler

Shieldbugs and Allies

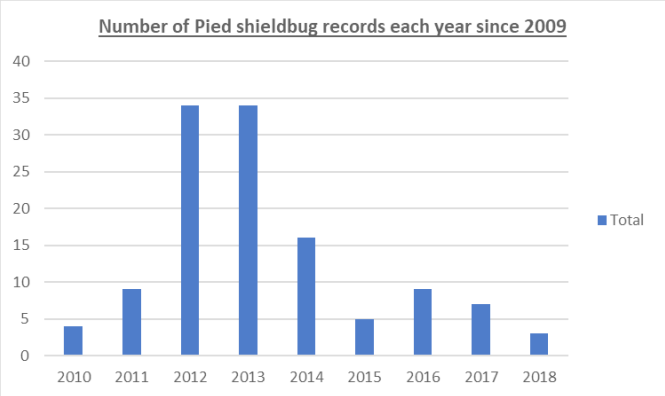
No new species have been reported during 2018. I received 477 records, including 82 via iRecord, covering 25 species from 62 recorders or groups of recorders. This brings the total number of records to 5715 for 31 species.

A first recorded sighting of *Adomerus biguttatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Hemiptera: Cydnidae), cow wheat shieldbug, away from the Wyre Forest was made by Stephen Plummer on the Stiperstones on 5th July 2018. He was "Surprised to find it in the middle of the path as we walked up the hill".

Cow Wheat Shieldbug (Photo by Bob Kemp)

In the Autumn there was an influx of *Leptoglossus occidentalis* Heidemann, 1910 (Hemiptera: Coreidae), western conifer seed bug with six being recorded in just over a two month period. Frustratingly for me a couple were from Wellington close to where I live! We now have 14 records of this bug in the county and the chances of finding it seem to be getting greater.

Yet again there were very few sightings of *Tritomegas bicolor* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Hemiptera: Cydnidae), pied shieldbug. The table below shows how the number recorded has declined dramatically since the production of the atlas.



Is this bug disappearing from Shropshire or have we stopped looking for it?

I was present last year when one was found in a stand of white dead nettle in a roadside verge. The group I was with wandered off only to return a few hours later to find that a concerned citizen had cut down all the roadside "weeds" in order to keep the verge neat and tidy. To quote a friend "Give me strength!"

Psyllids

As with the shieldbugs and allies there were no new species of psyllid found in 2018. I received 107 records for 19 species from 5 recorders. This number included 2 records from iRecord. The county list now stands 37 species with 767 records between them.

Amongst the records was the third record of *Lauritrioza alacris* (Flor 1861) (Hemiptera: Triozidae) reported by Jerry Clough via iRecord. This is an introduced species which is found on Bay (*Laurus nobilis*).

Auchenorrhyncha

In 2018 I received 811 records for 153 species of auchenorrhyncha including 24 from iRecord. These came from 33 recorders or groups of recorders. The county list now holds 5726 covering 229 species.

There were records for seven new species:

- *Macropsis fuscinervis* (Boheman 1845) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) an adult beaten from a small stand of aspen together with a few nymphs that may have been this species by Dan Knight on 23rd June 2018 at a site near Rednal.
- *Anaceratagallia venosa* (Fallen 1806) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) was taken by vacuum

sampling by Keith Fowler on 18th July 2018 at Prees Heath. A second one was swept from grass at the same site during the Chris Packham bioblitz the following day.

- *Stenidiocerus poecilus* (Herrich-Schaeffer 1835) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) was found at Weston Coton by Dan Knight on 23rd July 2018, beaten in small numbers from lombardy poplar.
- *Alebra coryli* Le Quesne 1977 (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) was swept from hazel at the edge of Comley Quarry by Keith Fowler 8th August 2018.
- *Kybos virgator* (Ribaut 1933) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) was beaten by Keith Fowler from alder bordering pasture at Crose Mere on 19th August 2018.
- *Cicadula frontalis* (Herrich-Schaeffer 1835) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) was found at Danson's Farm, Whitchurch by Keith Fowler on 5th September 2018 when the marginal vegetation of a pool was vacuum sampled.
- *Zygina hyperici* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1836) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) a single adult was taken from *Hypericum perforatum* growing on sheltered south facing slope of Old Oswestry Hillfort by Dan Knight on 6th October 2018. A second was found on *Hypericum* sp. at Eardington Quarry on 31st October by Keith Fowler.

Zygina hyperici (Photo by David Williams)

There were a few other sightings that were the first for the species for over 30 years:

- *Euscelis lineolatus* Brullé, 1832 (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) two records were made from the neighbourhood of the Montgomery Canal in 1985. Two more were swept by Keith Fowler on 22nd July 2018 from a meadow and an orchard at Upper Gravenor.
- *Rhopalopyx adumbrata* (Sahlberg, 1842) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) was first record by in 1972 at Earl's Hill. A specimen was taken by vacuum sampling grassland at Rough Park, Telford, on 1st August 2018 by Keith Fowler.
- *Struebingianella lugubrina* (Boheman, 1847) (Hemiptera: Delphacidae), there were three records in 1985 all from the Montgomery Canal and this year Dan Knight found this species on 12th August in good numbers at the roots of an extensive stand of *Glyceria maxima*. The site was the Montgomery Canal at Crickheath.
- *Stenocranus longipennis* (Curtis, 1837) (Hemiptera: Delphacidae), there have been no records since 1985 then three turned up this year. The first of these was on 18th August 2018 at Aston Locks by Dan Knight when he captured a male by shaking leaves of large *Carex paniculata* tussock over a tray.
- *Emelyanoviana mollicula* (Boheman, 1845) (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) was also first record by in 1972 at Earl's Hill. One was found in a vacuum sample of the grassland at Llanymynech Rocks by Keith Fowler on 10th October 2018.

Other Terrestrial Heteroptera

During last winter I spent time trying to align the county list I hold and the "The vice-county distribution and atlas of the Hemiptera-Heteroptera of the British Isles" published in The Hemipterist. Following correspondence with its editor, R P Ryan, a paper was published in this journal (Fowler) to include 121 additional species in the atlas. During that exercise it emerged that there were several species in the atlas for which I had no record. With help from Mr Ryan I was able to track down records for three of the species *Loricula distinguenda*, *Lyctocoris campestris* and *Pygolampis bidentata*. But there remained four others: *Acalypta brunnea*; *Acalypta carinata*; *Cimex columbarius* and *Mecomma dispar* which are referenced in the literature but provide no evidence of the record.

Of the additional species the finding of *Pygolampis bidentata* (Goeze, 1778) (Hemiptera: Reduviidae) by Thomas Marshall in September c1835 was the

most intriguing. Douglas and Scott include and entry for *Pygolampis bifurcata* (now known as *P. bidentata*) in "The British Hemiptera" published in 1865. They record that 'A single example is in the collection of Thomas Marshall, Esq., of Leicester, and he writes to us concerning it: "I found it some 30 years ago, beneath a piece of sandstone, at Quatford, near Bridgnorth, in Shropshire, in the middle of September."' The only other record in Britain on the NBN is from the New Forest, Hampshire on 22nd May 1914, Butler (1914), the specimen of which is held by Liverpool Museum, However, Southwood and Weston report that there another pre-1920 record from Devon.

Getting back to the present day I received 1,348 records of terrestrial heteroptera from 36 recorders in 2018 which included 28 from iRecord. These records covered 189 species. The county list now stands at 10,083 records for 251 species.

In addition to *Pygolampis bidentata* there were twelve species recorded in Shropshire for the first time, starting with another historic record:

- *Lyctocoris campestris* (Fabricius, 1794) (Hemiptera: Anthocoridae), Scudder reported this find by H Donnisthorpe at Oswestry in 1935. A second one has been found 83 years later by Dan Knight in a manure heap at Morton Common on 14th April 2018.
- *Plesiodema pinetella* (Zetterstedt, 1828) (Hemiptera: Miridae) was beaten from a Scot's pine at the side of a path on Haughmond Hill by Keith Fowler on 6th June 2018.
- *Psallus confusus* Rieger, 1981 (Hemiptera: Miridae) was caught in a pit fall trap on Prees Heath set by Nigel Jones and emptied on 13th June 2018.
- *Parapsallus vitellinus* (Scholtz, 1847) (Hemiptera: Miridae) were found at two sites on the same day by Dan Knight on 17th June 2018 by beating larch. There were several at Oswestry and many at Weston.
- *Psallodema fieberi* (Fieber, 1864) (Hemiptera: Miridae), three were beaten from wych elm at Weston on 17th June 2018 by Dan Knight. Several others were found subsequently by Dan at other sites.
- *Chlamydatus evanescens* (Boheman, 1852) (Hemiptera: Miridae) at Rednal on 23rd June 2018 by Dan Knight who found it to be numerous when hand searching mats of white stonecrop.
- *Pilophorus clavatus* (Linnaeus, 1767) (Hemiptera: Miridae) was beaten from oak at Prees Heath on 19th July 2018 by Nigel Cane-Honeysett.
- *Dictyonota fuliginosa* A. Costa, 1853 (Hemipter: Tingidae) was found at Prees Heath on 19th July 2018 by Keith Fowler when it was beaten from Broom.
- *Chlamydatus saltitans* (Fallén, 1807) (Hemiptera: Miridae) was found on 4th August 2018 at Rednal by Dan Knight who found several by hand searching under mats of black medick.
- *Agnocoris reclairei* (Wagner, 1949) (Hemiptera: Miridae) Dan Knight beat a single adult from crack willow growing by the River Vyrnwy at Dyffryd on 11th August 2018.
- *Gampsocoris punctipes* (Germar, 1822) (Hemiptera: Berytidae) Dan Knight located 5 adults by hand searching the ground layer beneath restharrow on 29th September 2018 at Dolgoch Quarry.
- *Lamproplax picea* (Flor, 1860) (Hemiptera: Lygaeidae) A male and three females were taken in vacuum samples from the schwingmoor at Brown Moss on 7th November 2018 by Keith Fowler.

In addition to these new records there were a couple of other significant records:

Acompocoris alpinus – Reuter, 1875 (Hemiptera: Anthocoridae) at long last we can confirm the

Heath assassin *Coranus subapterus* (Photo by David Williams)

presence of this species in Shropshire. On 19th July 2018 a male was beaten from Scot's pine by Keith Fowler. Hitherto only females, which are difficult to separate from other Acompocoris species, had been found.

Coranus subapterus (DeGeer, 1773) (Hemiptera: Reduviidae) a second record for this bug when one was spotted by Bob Kemp as it wandered across the path in Hodnet Heath on 22nd August 2018.

Online distribution atlases

The distribution maps for the four groups can be found on the FSC Biodiversity Projects website (http://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/) by selecting "Resources" from the menu, then "Online maps and atlases" followed by "Shropshire psocoptera" of by using these links:

- https://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/?q=fullscreen/shieldbugatlas
- https://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/?q=fullscreen/psyllidatlas
- https://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/?q=fullscreen/aucatlas
- https://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/?q=fullscreen/hetatlas.

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Beyond the Basics

Godfrey Blunt

You've made your basic record – the what, where, when, how and who of an observation – and entered it on a recording form to go to the County Recorder. Job done? Hardly.

When I was Shropshire County Recorder for Microlepidoptera I found that such basic records gave me very little scope for analysis and interpretation. I could list the records, map them and calculate flight periods, but not much else. I needed more information; and I came to realize that the means for getting it is at hand: it's the Comments field of the recording form. Few records I received had anything in the Comments field, and fewer still had comments that helped my analysis. Yet the scope for adding significant value to records by good use of this field is enormous. Here are four ways to do it.

1. Record habitat

The single most important thing you can do – how can any record be complete *without* habitat data? Yet hardly any recorders supply it. Simply putting *Garden* or *Woodland* is better than nothing, but much better still are entries such as:

- *Suburban garden with patches of unmown grass*
- *Rural garden with large trees backing onto arable field*
- *Hilltop conifer plantation*
- *Small dingle woodland with native trees and shrubs*

Be as informative as you can in a few words. Examples for other habitats:

- *Marginal vegetation by pool in urban nature reserve*
- *Open dry heath fringed by woodland and scrub*
- *Post-industrial site with dry grassland and damp areas*

2. Record other environmental factors

Key factors influencing species distributions and abundance are regional climates, local microclimates, and the nature and extent of habitat

management. It's not so difficult to record these as you may think. In Shropshire, altitude is a useful proxy measure for regional climate and should be noted where possible. Microclimates can be recorded by assessing the degree of shelter or exposure, sunlight or shade, e.g.

- *Plantation margin at 425m exposed to wind and sun*
- *Shaded and sheltered side of ride through deciduous woodland at 120m*

Management can often be recorded, e.g.

- *On regularly mown roadside verge*
- *On open heath lightly grazed by ponies and sheep*
- *On abandoned and unmanaged waste ground*

3. Record plants to species level

Many invertebrates have a close association with plants; sadly, few entomologists do. As plant ecology is far better understood than invertebrate ecology it offers a valuable tool by which we can interpret the latter. To do this we need accurate foodplant records, to species level wherever possible. You don't have to be an expert botanist to supply these: most foodplants are widespread native species that are often easier to identify than the invertebrates eating them. Record the scientific name of the plant (e.g. *Quercus petraea*) by preference, or its widely accepted vernacular name (sessile oak).

And if you find an unusual plant-feeding invertebrate, do mention whether its host plant grows nearby – so helpful to County Recorders in assessing your record!

4. Record behaviour

A neglected aspect of amateur entomology, to judge from the paucity of such articles in modern journals. Behaviour may be observed directly, e.g.

- *Flying among marshy vegetation but not over adjacent heath*
- *Basking on bole of tree in afternoon sun*
- *Ovipositing on lower leaves of Urtica dioica in open vegetation*

Or it may be implied, e.g.

- *Mines on Corylus avellana in deep shade*

(indicates the female's choice of oviposition site).

Behaviour can be a good subject for photography; and if your observation is detailed enough, why not publish a note on it in *Shropshire Entomology*?

Final thoughts

You won't gather information under all these headings for each sighting, but do try to record something. Focus on the quality, not the quantity, of your records: for better-known groups we don't need a lot more basic records, we need more informative records. Develop a habit of seeing no record as complete without an entry in the Comments field. You will find this simple act transformative. It will encourage you to observe what you look at. It will move you from being a data-logger to someone who sees invertebrates as living creatures interacting with their environment. You will learn things that are in no textbook, and in doing so will come to value common species as well as rare. And those who write up species accounts will find that your well-observed entries in the Comments field will go far in doing the job for them.

Shropshire Entomology Day

9.30 – 16.00 Sunday 26 January 2020

Booking fee £14.50 book online (search for "Shropshire ento day 2019")

09.30 Refreshments

10.00 Welcome from the Chair
Sue Townsend

Keynote 1:
Atypus (title to be confirmed) (50 mins)
Richard Burkmar

Flesh flies – a new recording scheme (15 mins)
Charles Griffiths

Mosquito identification (15 mins)
Marco Corradi

11.30 Coffee

Spider hunting wasps (30 mins)
Ian Cheeseborough

Bees and wasps of Bickerton Hall Cheshire (15 mins)
Chloe Aldridge

Counting the spots – bapping the ladybirds of Shropshire (15 mins)
Gerry Thomas

1300 Lunch

Dung beetles – species, ecology and economics (30 mins)
Frances Riding

Riverfly monitoring in Shropshire (15 mins)
Lisa Barlow

Biolinks training signpost (15 mins)
FSC Biodiversity

Keynote 2:
The Rothamsted National Insect Survey (50 mins)
James Bell

16.00 Close

A new Odonate arrival in Shropshire!

Sue Rees Evans

I'm aware that the last Shropshire Entomology newsletter listed no fewer than 24 Dipteran species new to the county, but even so I'm very pleased to announce one whole new species of Odonata. I highlighted the possible arrival of small red-eyed damselfly *Erythromma viridulum* (Charpentier, 1840) when I became VCR in 2011 and finally (just 8 years later!) it has come to pass.

In mid July Dave Jackson (Staffordshire dragonfly VCR) reported sightings near Enville (SO8286) – only a couple of km from our south west county border. I alerted people via the Shropshire Dragonfly Watch blog and finally the first Shropshire record came from Bob Pugh on 24th July, not near the borders, but further into the county at Stokesay Castle (Fig.1). Bob Kemp kindly double checked and confirmed the identification and also visited Enville, again confirming good numbers were present. On 5th August further Shropshire records of numerous individuals came from Meurig Garbutt at Dudmaston (Fig.2). Mick Richardson then subsequently saw 10+ individuals at Green Pond (SJ807037) near Albrighton on 13th August (Fig.3).

E.viridulum was first recorded in Britain on the Essex coast in 1999 (Smallshire & Swash, 2018) and has since expanded north and west. In 2012 this species was recorded in Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire (Twissel, Reeve & Averill, 2012) and for the first time in Wales at the Penclacwydd WWT Reserve in Carmarthenshire (Parr, 2012). The first Cheshire records were made in 2015 (Perrin, 2015) which explains why this species has been so eagerly anticipated.

It will now be interesting to see if *E. viridulum* expands throughout Shropshire and whether the copulating pairs seen in 2019 result in successful breeding. Please do keep a close eye on red-eyed damselflies from July 2020 and keep us posted. The key features to split between *E.viridulum* and the fairly common Red-eyed Damselfly *E.najas* (Hansemann, 1823) are as follows:

Males:

Small Red-eyed Damselfly - The blue colouration on the abdomen extends onto the sides of segment 2 from the thorax and onto segment 8 from segment 9. In addition a black X mark can just about be seen on the dorsal surface of segment 10. When at rest the wings extend just beyond the join between segments 6 and 7 (Figs 1,2 & 3).

Red-eyed Damselfly - In contrast the wings of the Red eyed Damselfly extend further down the abdomen upon which there is far less blue colouration. Segments 1, 9 and 10 are blue, but this does not spread onto segments 2 or 8. In addition there is no black X mark seen on the dorsal surface of segment 10.

Females:

Small Red-eyed Damselfly - Most noticeably the antehumeral (shoulder) stripes are complete (Fig. 1). The top of abdominal segment 10 has yellow green or blue coloration extending to the top and down the sides of segment 9. Hind margin of pronotum is rounded (Smallshire & Swash, 2018).

Red-eyed Damselfly – Antehumeral stripes are narrow, short or broken and dorsal surface of abdomen dark with blue just visible between segments. Pronotum is deeply lobed.

References

Parr, A. (2012) Wildlife Reports: Dragonflies. British Wildlife, 24(2): 124–126

Perrin, V. (2015) Wildlife Reports: Dragonflies. British Wildlife, 27(1): 48

Smallshire, D. and Swash, A. (2018) Britain's Dragonflies. A field guide to the damselflies and dragonflies of Britain and Ireland. 4th ed. Hampshire: Wild

Guides

Twissell, I., Reeve, P. and Averill, M. (2012) Vice County Reports: Gloucestershire,

Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Darter Magazine: British Dragonfly Society, 29:13–15

Fig.1 *E. viridulum* copulating pair seen at Stokesay Castle – the first Shropshire record. (Photo by B. Pugh)

Fig.2 *E. viridulum* male seen resting on lily pad at Dudmaston - behaviour more typical of *E. najas*. (Photo by M. Garbutt)

Fig.3 *E. viridulum* male photographed at Green Pond, Albrighton. (Photo by M. Richardson)

Woodwasps in The Shropshire Wyre

David Williams

On 25th August 2019 Shropshire Invertebrate Group & Shropshire Spider Group held a joint field trip to the Shropshire part of the Wyre Forest. Many nice finds resulted, but the most visually startling discoveries were two large species of woodwasp of the family Siricidae (order Hymenoptera; suborder Symphata).

The inward journey through the Earnwood area of the Forest took us past several stacks of felled conifer logs. These produced five or six female greater horntails, *Urocerus gigas* (Linnaeus, 1758), first spotted by Denise Bingham, and all ovipositing into the logs. A striking sight, the females are one of Britain's largest Hymenopteran insects. Despite being subject to Paparazzi-like photographic attention, they carried on with their egg-laying apparently unconcerned.

Making our way back to the Earnwood carpark in the afternoon, we passed the same log piles. The greater horntails were still there. But I spotted something else. It was a female of a different, but almost as large, woodwasp species, again ovipositing into the timber. Cameras were again wielded. A second female was spotted. On subsequently emailing the photos around for opinions, Nigel Jones pointed me in the direction of an excellent key:

https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxtaWtlc2luc2VjdGtleXNoeW1lbm9wdGVyYXxneDpkNWI1Y2I2MmM1N2UxYmM.

It proved possible to use this and my photographs to identify the species as *Sirex juvenicus* (Linnaeus, 1758). The record has subsequently been confirmed on *iRecord*.

There are currently 617 records of *U. gigas* on the NBN Atlas, including a dozen or so from Shropshire, but only a couple from The Wyre. But the NBN Atlas has only 27 records of *S. juvenicus* in total, and only one for Shropshire - at Whixall Moss. It is not mapped anywhere near The Wyre.

Urocerus gigas (Photo by David Williams)

Urocerus gigas (Photo by David Williams)

Sirex juvenicus (Photo by David Williams)

Sirex juvenicus (Photo by David Williams)

The County Recorder Network

This information is accurate at the time of publication. All these people carry out their roles as volunteers and we are indebted to their hard work.

Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths)

Butterflies – Tony Jacques
Email: rec-vc40@vc40tj.plus.com

Macro-moths – Tony Jacques
Email: rec-vc40@vc40tj.plus.com

Micro-moths – Mike Shurmer
Email: mpshurmer@gmail.com

Odonata (damselflies and dragonflies)

Dragonflies and damselflies – Vicki Nall
Email: victoriajanenall@gmail.com

Hemiptera (true bugs)

Terrestrial Bugs (now including shieldbugs), the Auchenorrhyncha and Psylloidea (Hemiptera) – Keith Fowler
Email: keith.c.fowler@blueyonder.co.uk

Aquatic Bugs (Hemiptera) – Frances Riding
Email: franrid@hotmail.com

Coleoptera (beetles)

Beetles (all families except Ladybirds and water beetles) – Caroline Uff
Email: caroline.uff@nationaltrust.org.uk

Ladybirds (Coccinellidae) – Gerry Thomas
Email: gerry.thomas7@btinternet.com

Water beetles – Frances Riding
Email: franrid@hotmail.com

Diptera (true flies)

Brachyceran flies (Empidid flies, hoverflies, robber flies, horse flies, soldier flies, tachinid flies, conopid flies, picture-winged flies etc) – Nigel Jones
Email: vc40insects@talktalk.net

Nematoceran flies (craneflies, winter gnats, bibionids, mosquitoes, etc) – Pete Boardman
Email: pete.ento22@gmail.com

Leaf-mining flies (Agromyzidae) – Mike Shurmer
Email: mpshurmer@gmail.com

Hymenoptera (bees, wasps, ants etc)

Aculeates (bees, wasps and ants) and **sawflies** (symphyta) – Ian Cheeseborough
Email: crossocerus1@gmail.com

Aquatic insects

Mayflies (Ephemeroptera) -The County Recorder for Mayflies, Ian Thompson, has retired from this position, so Shropshire currently has no County Recorder.

Caddisflies (Trichocera) and **Stoneflies** (Plecoptera) – Frances Riding
Email: franrid@hotmail.com

Orthopteroids

Grasshoppers, Crickets, Ground hoppers, Earwigs etc (Orthopteroids) – David Williams
Email: dw1971@btinternet.com

Psocoptera

Booklice – Keith Fowler
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Arachnids

Spiders, Harvestmen, Pseudoscorpions – The Shropshire Spider Group
Email: nigel@canehoneysett.plus.com

Hexapods

Springtails (Collembola) – Charlie Bell – Email: c.bell@field-studies-council.org

Molluscs

Mags Cousins: mags@bagbatch.co.uk